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February 11, 2005

Joint Policy Committee
Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 8th Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Joint Policy Committee Member:

The Planning and Conservation League supports the Joint Policy Committee's steps toward connecting land use to transit. However, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the policy, we urge you to adopt the Livable Communities Platform and to think carefully about the special opportunities of high speed rail to ensure good land use around transit stations.

With regard to high speed rail, significant transit funds planned to be allocated in connection with the high speed rail bond should be devoted to transit and non-motorized transportation infrastructure and services that maximize the smart growth and ridership potential of the high speed rail project, rather than being spent in a manner uncoordinated with the project. High speed rail stations will influence traffic on a broader scale than other transit stations, and particularly must be coordinated with commuter transit services. Development patterns around the station likely can support even greater commercial density than other transit stations, and particular efforts need to be made to include walkability for all riders and mobility options for out-of-town business travelers. Finally, Bay Area local governments should maximize the opportunity for high speed rail and related commuter service (possibly on the same tracks) to reduce VMT and improve air quality.

While your focus on housing and jobs along transit corridors as a measure for growth is laudable, it is not sufficient, leaving too much room for the possibility of poorly planned station areas. Please adopt the following Livable Communities Platform as part of a Regional Transit Oriented Development Policy. Before MTC funds transit expansion projects, cities should have to:

- Plan for compact development so that at least half the new housing built in the Bay Area is located in the half-mile radius station areas.
- Plan for a minimum threshold of housing within station areas, separate from a jobs threshold.
- Promote affordable housing in station areas.
- Prohibit big-box developments in station areas.



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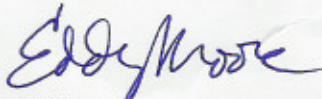
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- Create plans to minimize the space dedicated to parking in station areas.
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian plans for safe routes to and within station areas.

PCL supports the linkage between transportation funds and land use, but in its current state, this policy may be ineffective and may backfire in a number of cities.

Sincerely,



Eddy Moore,

Senior Project Manager